

Safer in a Country at War? An Investigation into Why Colombia's Displacement Crisis is a Largely Internal Phenomenon

Chapter 1: Introduction

I. Interest and context

I have been interested in Colombia and forced displacement from a young age thanks to my late grandfather, to whom this thesis is dedicated. My grandfather both lived in Colombia for a time and had the experience of fleeing the Nazi advance as a refugee during WWII. Both of these factors contributed to my profound interest in the events affecting Colombia in Fall 2016: a failed peace referendum between the Colombian government and the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) guerrilla group followed by a Nobel Peace Prize commemorating the effort. I thought to myself about the magnitude of an event that warrants international recognition even in failure and began investigating. As it turns out, the crisis in Colombia was and still is one of the most severe displacement events in history. Because I was working for a refugee center in Cape Town, South Africa at the time, I also noticed the anomalous lack of traditionally-recognized refugees given it was a displacement event of a large magnitude. Little did I know the causes for this discrepancy would be severely complex and incredibly important.

Since I began researching this thesis in November 2016, many notable events have changed the nature of the situation in Colombia. Most important of these, the Colombian government successfully negotiated a peace treaty with the FARC. However, as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) notes, this has unfortunately and counterintuitively accelerated the rate of displacement in Colombia. When writing this thesis, these events were too new to have robust academic analysis and I was therefore unable to

incorporate them into this thesis to the degree to which I would have liked. Therefore, this thesis mainly addresses the displacement situation affecting Colombia from a contemporaneous perspective, but without a deep investigation of the post-referendum dynamics of displacement.

II. Introduction

Today, there are more people forcibly displaced by violence than at any other period in human history,¹ surpassing even the aftermath of World War II.² Of particular concern are internally displaced persons (IDPs), or people forcibly displaced from their origin who have not crossed an international border. According to the UNHCR, both Syria and Colombia have around 7 million IDPs each, but the conflict in Syria has also generated over 5 million international refugees whereas the conflict in Colombia has generated an estimated 300 thousand refugees—around one-sixteenth to one-eighteenth the amount. In fact, Colombia stands out as the only displacement event of its magnitude with such a high ratio of IDPs to refugees.

Though a relatively new concept, IDPs are significant because they represent an alarming gap in international protections. IDPs regularly face conditions similar to if not worse than those of refugees,³ though they are entitled to almost none of the same protections under international law⁴; any security, protection, or service afforded to these persons is at the discretion of their government. Additionally, war today is almost exclusively not waged

¹ Edwards, Adrian. "Forced Displacement Worldwide at Its Highest in Decades." UNHCR. June 19, 2017.

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "UNHCR Global Trends 2015." United Nations. June 20, 2016.

³ Lam et al. "Vaccine-Preventable Diseases in Humanitarian Emergencies among Refugee and Internally-Displaced Populations." *Human Vaccines & Immunotherapeutics* 11, no. 11 (November 2, 2015): 2627–36.

⁴ Bigot, Antoine et al. "Refugee Health An Approach to Emergency Situations." *Médecins Sans Frontières*. September 1, 1997.

between two separate nation-states, instead taking place between a government and factions or groups within its population.⁵ In other words, IDPs are often at the mercy of a government at war with its own people—one that may also view those displaced as a liability to the war effort or even as enemy combatants. Unfortunately, this is not merely a hypothetical, but rather the reality of millions worldwide.

The Colombian internal displacement crisis is also one of the largest displacement events of modern times.⁶ Since the beginning of the armed conflict five decades ago,⁷ violence has displaced more than 8 million people,⁸ with at least 7.7 million IDPs,⁹ though numbers vary. This figure represents 29.1% of the country's rural population,¹⁰ around 11.5% of the country's total population,¹¹ and 19.5% of the global population of internally displaced people.¹² As mentioned earlier, displacement in Colombia is uniquely skewed towards IDPs; the conflict in Colombia produces a relatively small amount of refugees when compared to the enormous amount of people internally displaced. In fact, despite hosting arguably the largest IDP population, the amount of refugees produced by Colombia ranks 13th among conflicts occurring today.¹³ Understanding this conflict therefore provides a unique opportunity to discover what factors cause displaced persons to either remain within the

⁵ Ibáñez, Ana María, and Carlos Eduardo Vélez. "Civil Conflict and Forced Migration: The Micro Determinants and Welfare Losses of Displacement in Colombia." *World Development* 36, no. 4 (2008): 659-76.

⁶ COHA. "Colombia's "Invisible Crisis": Internally Displaced Persons." COHA. February 2, 2015. Accessed February 11, 2017.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Colombia Situation update, February 2017." *Refworld*. February 2017.

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Forced displacement worldwide at its highest in decades." *UNHCR*. June 19, 2017. Accessed September 9, 2017.

¹⁰ Ibáñez, Ana María, and Carlos Eduardo Vélez. "Civil Conflict and Forced Migration: The Micro Determinants and Welfare Losses of Displacement in Colombia." *World Development* 36, no. 4 (2008): 659-76.

¹¹ Dueñas et al. "Forced Displacement in Colombia: What Determines Expulsion and Reception in Municipalities?" 585-97.

¹² COHA. "Colombia's "Invisible Crisis": Internally Displaced Persons."

¹³ World Bank, The. "Refugee Population by Country or Territory of Origin." *Refugee Population by Country or Territory of Origin | Data*.

country as IDPs or flee entirely to become refugees through comparisons to other conflict with different distributions of refugees and IDPs. This has potential impacts concerning expectations about conflict and displacement, how conflicts in certain contexts could affect those it displaces, and the understanding of internal versus external displacement as a symptom of the various factors I will identify and discuss later in this paper.

My research will focus on the question of why the conflict in Colombia has generated an internal displacement crisis rather than a refugee crisis. This can be broken down into a number of smaller investigations. These are: investigating why there is a high number of IDPs, why there are relatively few refugees for a conflict and displacement event of this magnitude, and what factors otherwise make Colombia's crisis unique. In answering this question, a few unusual distinctions from similar research become important. First, the numbers of IDPs and refugees are important, both as a ratio and individually. As will be shown later in this paper, this leads to factors other than the conflict in Colombia having an influence on analysis of the IDP ratio (structural factors extending the time people remain internally displaced, for example). Second, the distinction between IDP and refugee operates across a relatively arbitrary in/out political boundary. For most purposes, the physical act of crossing an imagined boundary is not so important, yet this is the entirety of the distinction between an IDP and a refugee.

These considerations and clarifications exist here because this paper seeks to operate within a few gaps in migration literature. I believe no other paper has made an effort to distinguish between the determinants of refugees and IDPs be this in a case study or otherwise. The aforementioned question, what determinants relate to IDPs crises versus refugee crises, is ultimately almost unanswerable in this context, but what I hope this paper

does provide is an investigation into a uniquely useful case study that may shed light on a number of important factors and could elucidate a path for future study.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will provide adequate historical background to contextualize the other chapters of this thesis and the events that have shaped today's displacement crisis. Then, I will briefly explain some of the preliminary causes of displacement and describe the patterns of this displacement. However, it will not be until later in this paper I use this background information to form an argument about which determinants are significant in their relationship to internal displacement. In the following chapter, I will review the literature available on this topic, describe in detail my methodology, and discuss how choices made in these two areas affected the outcome of this thesis. In Chapter 3, I will go into more detail about the different important factors relating to Colombia's internal displacement crisis, explain their importance, and evaluate the factors to form an argument. Finally, in Chapter 4, I will summarize and conclude the paper and discuss the impact further research could have on this issue.

III. Historical background and significance

Though the Colombian internal displacement crisis is among the largest displacement events today, its origins date back well over a half century. Forced displacement in Colombia has traditionally been caused by violent political clashes between competing factions vying for control over political entities and territory. Later in this paper, understanding violence as having political roots and as having goals to control resources and territory will help with understanding the causes of internal displacement. Although violent political organization predates this event, the relationship between political struggles, violence and displacement

became extremely prescient with the assassination of Colombia's populist leader, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán.

Gaitán held many positions throughout his life—including congressman, senator and mayor of Bogotá—but made the largest impact as a presidential candidate before and after the 1946 elections.¹⁴ Though Gaitán did not win the election, he was responsible for fundamentally changing the political landscape in two notable ways. First, Gaitán ran as a political independent despite being both a populist and a leftist.¹⁵ His absence from Colombia's communist party, then called *Partida Socialista Democrata* (PSD), split the left-leaning vote and allowed the conservative party to take the presidency for the first time in 16 years.¹⁶ Second, Gaitán was still massively popular and inspired a multiclass, watershed movement called Gaitanismo. This movement was significant because it drew upon many popular and historical demands of the Colombian people and united a heterogeneous, yet identifiably subaltern, population through an organized, populist message. It is also of note that this message resembles that of various armed groups that would become powerful after his assassination.¹⁷ On April 9th, 1948, Gaitán was assassinated by a gunman believed to have ties to the Colombian elite.¹⁸ This event began Colombia's—now long¹⁹—association between the political process and violence,²⁰ which is an important social consideration to displacement in Colombia today.

¹⁴ Green, W. J. "Sibling Rivalry on the Left and Labor Struggles in Colombia during the 1940s." *Latin American Research Review* 35, no. 1 (Jan 01, 2000): 85-117.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 85-117.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 85-117.

¹⁷ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." *International Regional Science Review* 33, no. 2 (2009): 157-80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 85-117.

¹⁹ Chasteen, John Charles. "Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America."

²⁰ Green, W. J. "Sibling Rivalry on the Left and Labor Struggles in Colombia during the 1940s." 85-117.

After Gaitán's assassination began widespread displacement and violence, particularly in rural areas.²¹ This period became known as *La Violencia*, the violence, and lasted from 1948 into the 1950s.²² Violence came mainly in the form of selective massacres and assassinations carried out by various groups and almost always targeting peasants. Unlike other stages of the violent conflict in Colombia, this violence was perpetrated by large numbers of actors including local police, neighbors, guerrillas, wandering criminals and bandits. In some areas of Colombia, however, this conflict could already be best described as a guerrilla war (both Communist guerrillas and right-wing paramilitaries were active during *La Violencia*.)²³ This "multiplicity of violence" is what influences the perception of politics as violent in Colombia described in the previous paragraph.²⁴ It is also important to note that the period of time during which *La Violencia* took place also saw the beginning of rapid Colombian urbanization, which, similarly to the displacement due to violence, led many economic migrants to travel from rural to urban areas and began an association between the two phenomena.²⁵

The most important takeaways from this period in Colombian history are the political implications of this violent activity. Gaitanismo first organized the working class and, second, energized the upheaval that started *La Violencia*.²⁶ This violence subsequently set into motion a long association between politics and violence in the minds of Colombians²⁷ and created conditions for economic migration and displacement due to violence to occur in

²¹ Rojas, Cristina, and Daniel Tubb. "La Violencia in Colombia, through Stories of the Body." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 32, no. S1 (2013): 126-50.

²² Chasteen, John Charles. "Born in blood and fire: a concise history of Latin America." New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.

²³ Rojas, Cristina, and Daniel Tubb. "La Violencia in Colombia, through Stories of the Body." 126-50.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 126-50.

²⁵ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 2

²⁶ Green, W. J. "Sibling Rivalry on the Left and Labor Struggles in Colombia during the 1940s." 85-117.

²⁷ Rojas, Cristina, and Daniel Tubb. "La Violencia in Colombia, through Stories of the Body." 126-50.

similar fashions.²⁸ Further, the violence of this period occurred in patterns recognizably similar to patterns of violence today—for example widespread rural and indigenous/Afro-Colombian displacement²⁹—and possibly contributed to current patterns in the effects of political violence.

La Violencia gave way to a period of relative peace and stability before ultimately devolving into civil war. The communist insurgency and rural protests over land concentration are credited with starting the Colombian Civil War,³⁰ a conflict that raged well into the 21st century.³¹ This time period is incredibly difficult to discuss because there were multiple belligerents whose alliances shifted over the course of the conflict. Generally speaking, there were three main forces at play: the Colombian government, left-wing guerrilla insurgencies like the FARC and National Liberation Army (ELN), and right-wing paramilitaries.³²

The larger of the two main left-wing guerrilla movements, the FARC, started showing signs of rural militancy as early as the 1920s.³³ Additionally, around 40% of those who attended the Communist party conference in 1958 were of the Colombian peasantry class, something very unusual for Communist movements in Latin America during this time.³⁴ This means guerrillas in Colombia have a long history of disproportionate association with rural areas, something with large implications for the profile of displacement today.

²⁸ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 2.

²⁹ Ibid., 125-50.

³⁰ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 159.

³¹ Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. "Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of US Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia." 249-67.

³² Ibid., 249-67.

³³ Brittain, James J., and James Petras. Revolutionary social change in Colombia the origin and direction of the FARC-EP. London: Pluto Press, 2010.

³⁴ Ibid.

Like during *La Violencia*, belligerents in this time period used targeted political killings and assassination as a military strategy.³⁵ These strategies continued to take place predominantly in rural areas. However, the conflict operated at a rather low intensity through the 1980s, until factors like US intervention and the guerrillas' clashes with narcoterrorism catalyzed the conflict.³⁶ This is also when paramilitaries first began to emerge in their current forms, commonly as private armies hired by drug cartels. Both those involved in illicit economies and those with extensive lands or assets often hired private armed groups to defend their property, leading to a more intense conflict and more displacement of the non-wealthy civil population.³⁷

More recently, conflict between the Colombian government and the insurgent guerrillas has come through paramilitaries. Though not officially state sanctioned, it is clear through instances like the defense minister in the Betancur administration's launching of a new military brigade in Puerto Berrío with the purpose of working closely with paramilitaries.³⁸ These groups also carried out political assassinations and many united to form the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), which had roughly 15,000 members at peak strength.³⁹ Paramilitary violence peaked shortly after the AUC's formation in 1997 and included strategies such as "funding pro-paramilitary politicians... [killing] civilians to coerce local populations into voting for such politicians, deterring would-be political competitors from entering races or simply assassinating candidates."⁴⁰ These types of political actions eventually led to paramilitary insertion into electoral politics. Colombia's

³⁵ Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. "Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of US Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia." 249-67.

³⁶ Ibid., 249-67.

³⁷ Dueñas et al. "Forced Displacement in Colombia: What Determines Expulsion and Reception in Municipalities?" 585-97. DOI 10.1515/peps-2014-0037

³⁸ Ibid., 249-67.

³⁹ Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. "Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of US Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia." 249-67.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 249-67.

judicial branch began to recognize these organizations as illegal, though their association with the military continued into the 2000s.⁴¹ Association between paramilitaries and the Colombian government may have contributed to the US labelling guerrilla insurgencies as terrorist groups, though this is complicated by both the paramilitary and the guerrilla groups' involvements with the drug trade.⁴²

The complex relationship between guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and the Colombian government is important because it has meant a wide variety of insurgent tactics are taken out onto rural Colombian citizens. Today, right-wing paramilitaries control a large portion of the drug trade in Colombia, and remain influential to the IDP crisis in the form of the aforementioned tactics for political violence. Armed groups also frequently use violence to compete with the Colombian government's various development projects over control of resource-rich areas, causing harm and displacement to those who live there.⁴³ Further, the aforementioned qualities of the conflict provide a scenario in which targeting individuals or individual families for territorial gains or for control over resources is a viable and effective strategy. As I will explore later in this paper, this fact along with Colombian state presence affects how individuals are displaced within Colombia.

The FARC have historically been the most potent aggressor to the Colombian government,⁴⁴ but the two parties recently reached a peace agreement in November 2016.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, their inactivity has not led to a reduction in displacement. In fact, UNHCR reports show Colombian displacement has grown in 2017.⁴⁶ Though the Colombian

⁴¹ Ibid., 249-67.

⁴² Ibid., 249-67.

⁴³ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." *International Social Science Journal* 55, no. 175 (2003): 157-67.

⁴⁴ United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)*, 19 July 2017.

⁴⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Colombia Situation update, February 2017."

⁴⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Forced displacement growing in Colombia despite peace agreement." UNHCR. March 10, 2017.

government has also begun peace talks with other large rebel groups, it is unlikely the violence, and thus displacement, will end in the near future, especially given the precedence set by the withdrawal of the FARC.⁴⁷ Because this paper takes place in the middle of these events, future research could extrapolate based upon the new information that will come to be gathered and understood in the post-FARC era.

Finally, it is also important to note that the denominations between left-wing guerrillas, paramilitaries, the police, Colombian military forces, and civilians are not always clear or mutually exclusive. Paramilitaries, for example, were often formed largely of plain-clothed police officers to carry out the less scrupulous objectives of the state.⁴⁸ An individual may have multiple memberships in these categories that can shift over time. Further, guerrilla groups often have very violent means of recruitment and often force children to join their forces. These factors are very difficult to quantify in any analysis of the conflict in Colombia or the migration it causes, but it is important to keep in mind when evaluating or discussing the actions of and interactions between these groups.

IV. Patterns of migration in Colombia

Internal forced migration within Colombia is extremely widespread both numerically and geographically, though there are observable patterns and factors that shed light on how this migration takes place. In this section, I aim to illustrate how this migration happens and mention the most important factors and distinctions influencing the crisis. In later sections, I will expand upon my analysis of these factors. First, I will describe where and how displacement occurs most frequently within Colombia with a brief discussion of Colombia's

⁴⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Colombia Situation update, February 2017."

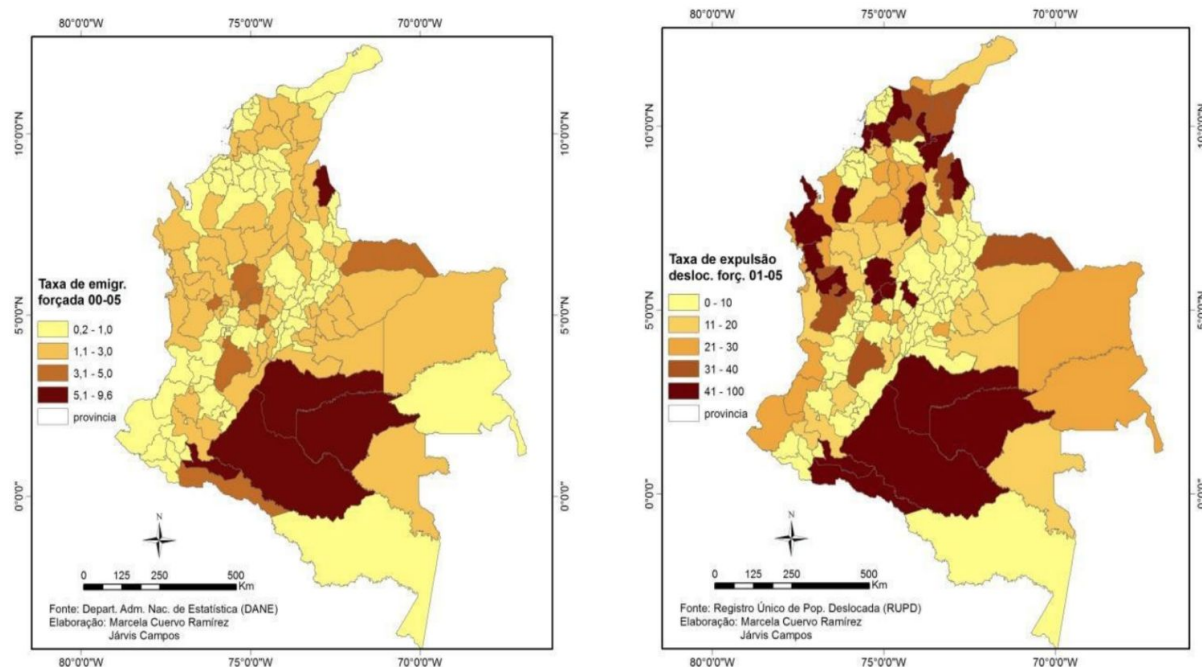
⁴⁸ Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. "Bases, Bullets, and Ballots: The Effect of US Military Aid on Political Conflict in Colombia." 249-67.

refugees. Then, I will make a note about the physical geography of Colombia and how this interacts with and perhaps influences the observed patterns of migration. Finally, I will briefly introduce the most important factors affecting these patterns of migration.

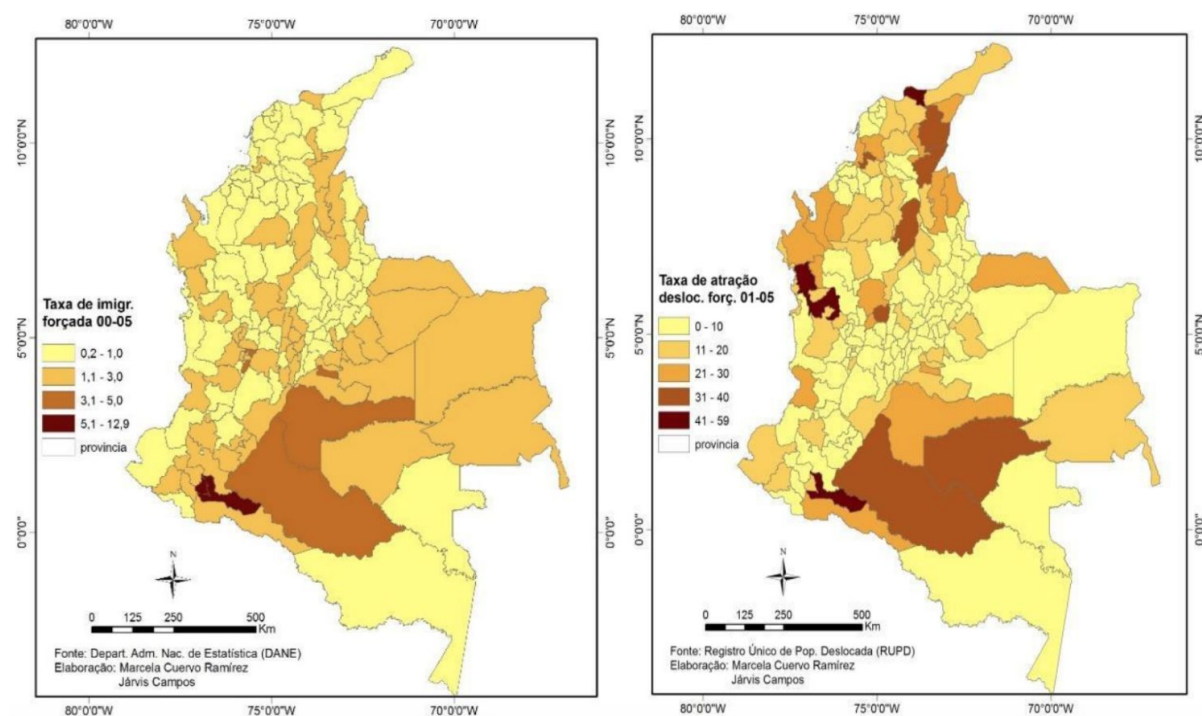
The most important observation to make about where internal migration takes place in Colombia is that there are actually very few areas that are not involved. Although statistics are somewhat varied and it is difficult to tease economic migration from forced displacement, statistical analysis of the Colombian government's official victim registry, the Registry System of Displaced Population of the National Information Network on Victims of the Armed Conflict (RUPD-RNI), put the number of municipalities—the smallest denomination of area recognized in Colombia—with significant expulsion and reception at 90% or over 1,000 municipalities.⁴⁹ Further, as the wording of the previous sentence may have indicated, the areas of expulsion and reception overlap to the point where they correspond; most municipalities in Colombia both expel forced migrants and receive them. Below I have included two unaltered graphics created by Ramírez et al. that display the expulsion and reception patterns as measured using both the Colombian census and the aforementioned RUPD-RNI.⁵⁰ A major visible discrepancy between these two sources is that the census does not measure the possibility of someone being forcibly displaced from their home and relocating to a different place within their municipality of origin while the RUPD-RNI does accommodate for this situation.

⁴⁹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 12.

⁵⁰ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 11, 12.



Map of IDP expulsion using census (left) and victims registry (right) from Ramírez et al.



Map of IDP reception using census (left) and victims registry (right) from Ramírez et al.

A plethora of useful information can be gained from this data. First, when comparing the two sources for each map, it is clear to see that migration within one's municipality of origin is fairly common, especially in the North. Second, upon looking at the map of

reception sites, one can observe that many municipalities on Colombia's borders, particularly the borders with Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela, are popular reception sites for migrants. Third, though difficult to read directly from these maps, it is clear to see that migrants do not exclusively relocate to areas near the capital, Bogotá. I will expand upon the data illustrated in these maps in later chapters.

Although the majority of Colombian municipalities participate in internal displacement events, there are still observable patterns. Most importantly, the majority of internal migration, both forced and economic, occurs from rural areas to more urban areas.⁵¹ However, there is some diversity in exactly what type of urban area is popular for receiving migrants. To be more specific, there is an observable trend of forcibly displaced persons migrating from their place of origin to the nearest provincial capital or to the outskirts of large cities like Bogotá.⁵² Although there is a diversity in what type of areas where IDPs settle (e.g. urban versus semi-urban), the trend is almost always from a rural area toward a more urban area.⁵³ Outside of these large cities are massive informal settlements among a long tradition of conurbation.⁵⁴ Attracted to the lower cost of housing in municipalities near cities, the people in these settlements typically do not receive the protections and services to which they are legally entitled⁵⁵ and stay for extended periods of time, all the while maintaining the title of an IDP.⁵⁶ I will discuss this concept further in later chapters. Other areas that have high rates of migration are the Eastern Plains region; municipalities near the international

⁵¹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 9

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) - Norwegian Refugee Council. "Colombia." IDMC » Colombia. 2018.

⁵⁴ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

⁵⁵ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." *Forced Migration Review* 34 (February 2010): 10-11.

⁵⁶ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

borders with Venezuela, Panama and to some degree Ecuador; and municipalities on or near the Pacific coast,⁵⁷ which accounts for approximately one third of all displacement within Colombia.⁵⁸

One characteristic of migration within Colombia that also perhaps explains how municipalities can both receive and expulse migrants is the scale of migration. Migration in Colombia typically happens between provinces, the measure of administrative area in between departments (the largest) and municipalities.⁵⁹ Migration within department boundaries accounts for 57.6% of the total, while migration within municipal boundaries describes 15.2% of situations.⁶⁰ Including traditional migration, just 22.5% of Colombians live in a different department to where they were born compared to 32.4% living in a different province and 40.0% living in a different municipality.⁶¹ In fact, around one third of the forcibly displaced in Colombia listed closeness to their place of origin as a motivation for choosing their migration destination. This scale of migration indicates migrants travel short distances, though not extremely short. Combined with the knowledge that migrants often travel to their department capital, these patterns seem to fit the concept of intervening opportunities theory.⁶² This concept, which I will expand upon in later chapters, predicts that

⁵⁷ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 11.

⁵⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) - Norwegian Refugee Council. "Colombia." IDMC » Colombia. 2018.

⁵⁹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 7.

⁶⁰ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 160

⁶¹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 7.

⁶² Denslow, David A., and Peter J. Eaton. "Migration and Intervening Opportunities." *Southern Economic Journal* 51, no. 2 (October 1984): 369. doi:10.2307/1057818.

migrants are attracted to places with higher wages and are deterred by distance, sometimes further explained by higher costs associated with longer travel of people and information.

But not all who flee the conflict stay within Colombia; the UNHCR estimates there are as many as 340,000 Colombian refugees living abroad mostly in Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama and Costa Rica.⁶³ Ecuador has by far the largest amount of Colombian refugees⁶⁴ as well as literature describing their situation, so I will focus on this population. As of December 2017, Ecuador officially hosts around 60,000 refugees, 95% of whom are Colombian,⁶⁵ though “refugee” is here used as a legal term and does not encompass everyone who has come to Ecuador fleeing violence or persecution. Estimates for the total number of Colombians who have fled to Ecuador are around 250,000.⁶⁶ This population was the largest refugee population in Latin America as recently as 2011,⁶⁷ but with the evolving situation in Venezuela, this could soon change and some reports say Colombia now hosts both the largest IDP and refugee populations in Latin America.⁶⁸ Unlike the total number of people displaced by the conflict in Colombia, the number of those fleeing to Ecuador is decreasing and Ecuador’s refugees are increasingly from Venezuela and the Middle East.⁶⁹

As for who these refugees are and what their experiences are like, trends show the situations and demographics of Colombian refugees in Ecuador and Colombian IDPs are

⁶³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "COLOMBIA FACTSHEET February 2017." UNHCR. February 2017.

⁶⁴ Aguilar, Sonia. "UNHCR Chief Highlights Ecuador's Commitment to Solutions for Refugees." UNHCR. July 05, 2016.

⁶⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "2018 Planning Summary Operation: Ecuador." UNHCR. December 29, 2017.

⁶⁶ Aguilar, Sonia. "UNHCR Chief Highlights Ecuador's Commitment to Solutions for Refugees." UNHCR. July 05, 2016.

⁶⁷ Mancheno, Luis F. (2014) "Persecuted, Discriminated, and Rejected: The Firm Resettlement Bar to Colombian Refugees Living in Ecuador," Roger Williams University Law Review: Vol. 19: Iss. 1, Article 5.

⁶⁸ Washington Post Editorial Board, The. "Opinion | Latin-America's Worst-ever Refugee Crisis: Venezuelans." The Washington Post. February 23, 2018.

⁶⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "2018 Planning Summary Operation: Ecuador." UNHCR.

eerily similar. These similarities include the reason for leaving one's home, age, gender, lack of access to property, and income or personal wealth.⁷⁰ Notable differences include experiences of violence, discrimination, and social isolation. I will discuss the specifics of these factors and how they relate to my research question in greater detail later in this paper.

The experience or perception of experience of life as a Colombian in neighboring countries is one of many geographic factors that influence migration in Colombia's displacement crisis. Others include Colombia's geographical size, population distribution, and geographic features. Analyzing these factors is not to say that leaving Colombia is impossible or even particularly difficult; Colombia has a functional system of roads and busses that allow most access to travel to Ecuador or Venezuela in the case of an emergency situation. Rather, this section aims to discuss how geographic factors may influence migration, perhaps in situations where a decision is made near the margin or when considering the scale of millions of people.

The first and most obvious geographic factor of influence is a comparison of Colombia to its immediate neighbors. Traditionally, this type of distinction may not be as important given frameworks exist that evaluate specific places at a much smaller scale when describing migration, but given the only distinction between a refugee and an IDP is crossing an international border, the different experiences offered in other countries is of unique importance. Colombia shares borders with Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Venezuela, though as I will discuss later, the borders with Peru and Brazil are largely uninhabited and are made up of the very difficult terrain that is the Amazon rainforest. Economically, Colombia performs at or above the level of its most accessible neighbors. Comparisons between

⁷⁰ Shedlin, Michele G., Carlos U. Decena, Hugo Noboa, and Óscar Betancourt. "Sending-Country Violence and Receiving-Country Discrimination: Effects on the Health of Colombian Refugees in Ecuador." *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 16, no. 1 (2013): 119-24.

countries must also consider border restrictions and other related costs to crossing international borders. Additionally, Venezuela has experienced aggressive economic downturn, shortages, and political instability in recent years. This has led to Colombia actually hosting more Venezuelan refugees than Venezuela does Colombian refugees.⁷¹ As for Ecuador, some of the same problems with violent insurgency are also gaining strength. In fact, the ELN is believed to operate from within Ecuador in addition to or despite their continued influence in Colombia. Likewise, Colombian refugees face intense discrimination on the basis of nationality,⁷² something that is by definition impossible within Colombia. Although these situations are not conclusively worse than the armed conflict that continues in Colombia, they certainly decrease the incentive to become a refugee.

Colombia is also a relatively large country in terms of land area (27th in the world) and contains a section of the Andes mountain chain in its western half.⁷³ The population is concentrated mainly in the Andes region and Caribbean coast and very few people live along the borders with Brazil, Peru, Panama, and the majority of the Venezuelan border.⁷⁴ There are very few roads in the regions near Colombia's neighbors (with the exception of Ecuador and northern Venezuela); the Darién Gap between Colombia and Panama is infamous for not being traversible by car and the Amazon rainforest engulfs Colombia's borders with Peru and Brazil. This has important implications in that Colombia's geography provides physical challenges in fleeing across many directions, especially given limited resources. However, it is also important to note that migration often happens in steps and that large distances or

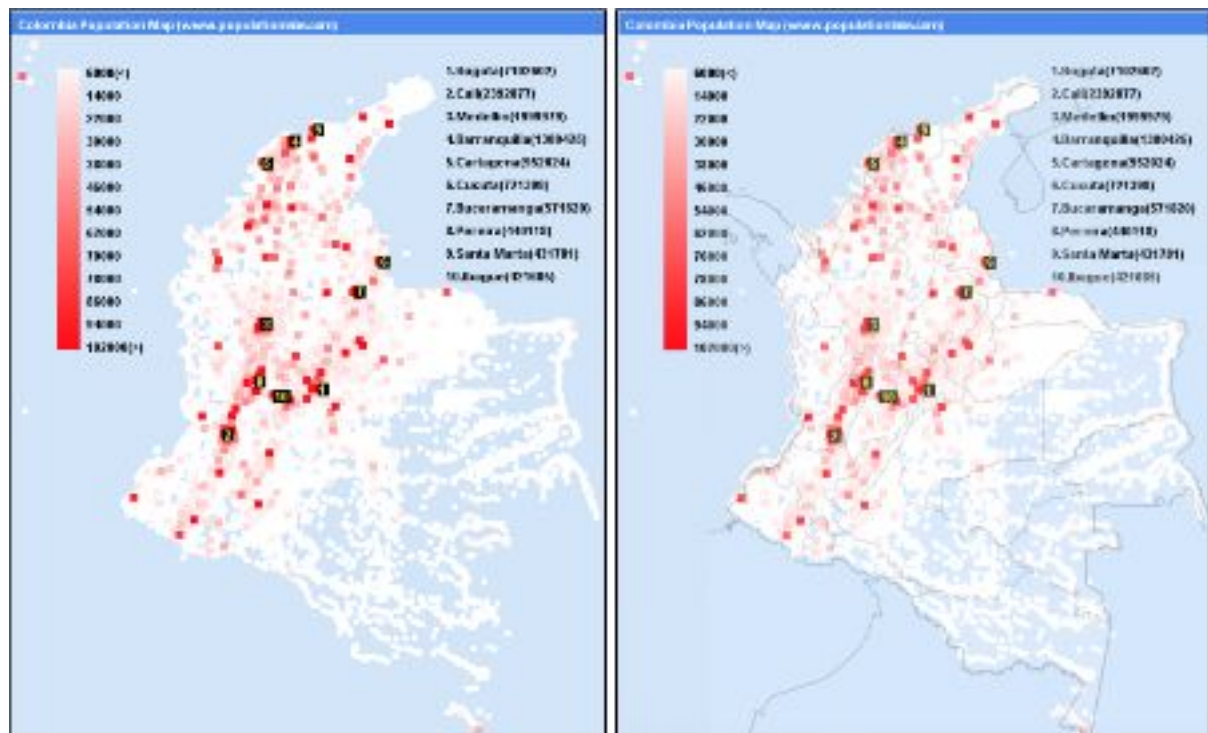
⁷¹ Gillespie, Patrick. "Venezuelan Refugee Crisis Adds to Colombia's Growing Challenges." CNNMoney. February 22, 2018.

⁷² Mancheno, Luis F. (2014) "Persecuted, Discriminated, and Rejected: The Firm Resettlement Bar to Colombian Refugees Living in Ecuador."

⁷³ Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook: COLOMBIA." Central Intelligence Agency. April 24, 2018.

⁷⁴ PopulationLabs. "Colombia Population Map Statistics Graph Most Populated Cities Density." PopulationLabs.com. 2011.

difficult terrain are not explicit barriers to migration. What this does mean is that becoming an IDP is somewhat easier than becoming a refugee if otherwise equal incentives exist.



Population density map of Colombia, from PopulationLabs.com (left) with my border emphasis (right).

However, it is not just a displaced person's place of origin that is important, the distribution of areas with high IDP reception also geographically influences their likelihood to stay within Colombia. This is because areas on the Colombian border, particularly the international borders with Venezuela, Ecuador, and Panama, are increasingly popular destinations for receiving the forcibly displaced.⁷⁵ This can be seen in the maps of Colombia's receptive municipalities. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, noting Colombia's borders with Brazil and Peru are heavily forested and very sparsely populated effectively accounts for all directions and methods of leaving Colombia with the exception of more expensive methods like by international boat or plane and a handful of municipalities

⁷⁵ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 1.

along the border that do not have a tradition of hosting the displaced. It follows that a displaced person coming from within Colombia could have incentive to stop before crossing the border, which is required to become a refugee, creating a mild international threshold of sorts.

This is not to say that leaving Colombia is extremely difficult; the hundreds of thousands of Colombian refugees are evidence that this is not the case. Rather, these factors imply that the proportion of those displaced fleeing the country as refugees could be higher if Colombia had more stable and prosperous neighbors, if more of the population were distributed near the borders, or if the border areas were more easily traversable.

V. Conclusion

It is clear that migration as a result of Colombia's conflict is extremely widespread and complicated. Further, the conflict has deep historical roots and involves nearly every aspect of society. In this chapter, I have provided what I believe to be the key background information required to determine exactly how the situation in Colombia has led to such a massive IDP crisis in contrast to the much more common balance between IDPs and refugees. In the next chapter, I will discuss the current state of related literature and describe how I used these sources to construct this paper.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Literature in Review

I. Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe the methods, sources, and framework I used to answer my research question and discuss what influence this had on my processes and outcomes. First, I will describe the methods and some of the frameworks I used to answer my research question and describe the specific types of sources I used at each stage. Then, I will go into depth about the types of sources and frameworks I used, what choices I made in picking sources, and the tensions and commonalities present between and within different literatures.

II. Methodology

To answer the question of why the conflict in Colombia has lead to a displacement crisis of predominantly the internally displaced, I first had to understand the context in which this event takes place. No historical event, especially not one touching tens of millions of lives across decades, happens in isolation and many historical factors did turn out to influence the nature of displacement in Colombia. Next, I had to determine what the causes of displacement are in this scenario. Other events have occurred both globally and within Colombia that have had little to no influence on this crisis, despite what appearances may have suggested. Then, I evaluated all of the reasons for displacement I had come across to figure out which likely had an influence in causing an internal displacement scenario rather than a refugee crisis as has happened in other conflicts. Finally, when possible, I used comparative analysis to determine which of the factors influencing internal displacement were likely to be unique to the situation in Colombia and therefore the factors that influence the internal displacement crisis.

Ultimately, this process cannot provide a definitive answer to a research question like the one this paper considers. This does, however, shed light on what could be responsible for Colombia's unique migration crisis and what factors reinforce the situation affecting Colombia as being largely internal.

III. Sources and literature

When discussing the process of assembling data into this paper, two methods of sorting material stand out as particularly important. First, for each section what type of publications were most useful and second, what type of ideological sources helped at different stages of the process.

The vast majority of my research was done through the analysis of academic articles, textbooks, and publications by international or governmental organizations. While the analysis of migration naturally lends itself to study by way of academic articles, I argue information from international organizations is also important. One reason for this is because the term "internally displaced person" is relatively new in the global consciousness and its introduction came at the result of a push from international organizations in the early 1990s. In fact, the official legal definition of an IDP in Colombia did not come until 1997.⁷⁶ Furthermore, I found that synthesis of many different statistics and more up-to-date data were more readily available in the publications of international organizations such as the UNHCR and Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) than in academic literature. This is perhaps due to the discrepancy in turnaround times across the two mediums as well as their audiences; international organizations tend to focus their efforts on pointing out the injustices felt by vulnerable groups around the world as well as engaging the layperson in the topic.

⁷⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) - Norwegian Refugee Council. "IDP Laws and Policies." IDMC » IDP Law and Policy. 2013.

Though I initially felt my research would benefit from in-person interviews with the internally displaced and those who work with them, I grew more interested in the trends that define the displacement and believe my research works better without these interviews. Also, a number of my sources collected data using interviews or surveys. I frequently came across either academic articles, organizational reports, or laws written in Spanish and in every case translated the information myself.

To understand the historical context of the conflict in Colombia, I relied upon mainly secondary sources including textbooks and academic articles. Due to the protracted nature of the conflict, specific events and personal narratives are proportionately not as important. I found the conflict well-documented and conveniently synthesized by these secondary sources, but did supplement this information with a handful of primary or tertiary sources for either specific information or trends.

In understanding how the displaced migrate, I relied almost entirely on academic articles such as the work done on internal migration and forced displacement flows by Ramírez et al. when detailing different causes and effects of the conflict and displacement in Colombia. Many articles contain original research on facets of the displacement crisis and explain the trends and interactions between various aspects of the conflict and displacement. Because I often struggled to find specific statistics in academic articles, I referred occasionally to international or governmental organizations concerned with the crisis in Colombia, such as the UNHCR and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), for data such as the number of the displaced recently or per municipality, but the overwhelming majority of the data analysis in this section came from academic sources. Further, nearly the entirety of these sources dealt with Colombia specifically.

The exception to these sources is the geographic influences section. Due to a lack of background in statistical modelling and geography, I used maps of Colombia's population density, Google Maps for information about roads, and academic articles pertaining to geographic features and their influence on migration. After using population density maps to gain an understanding of where Colombia's population is concentrated, I used Google Maps and previously-used sources to make intuitions about how feasible fleeing Colombia across its various international borders would be. Dense forest cover, low population density, and the message from Google Maps saying the majority of Southeastern Colombia was "outside of coverage area for driving" led me to believe a crossing over the Peruvian, Brazilian, and a majority of the Venezuelan borders would be difficult. Further, academic articles such as Ramírez et al. provided information about areas near the borders of Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela, which, in combination with the previous sentence accounts for all of Colombia's borders.

Going a step further, I find it important to note that many of my sources utilize the Registry System of Displaced Population of the National Information Network on Victims of the Armed Conflict (RUPD-RNI) as a major source of data for statistical analysis. The reason for this is clear because it is one of the most detailed and robust sources of aggregate data on the victims of the conflict, but any limitations of the RUPD-RNI will have proportionate effects on this paper. One example of a possible limitation is that the RUPD-RNI system is a manual entry, opt-in scenario that, as many sources argue, does not necessarily correlate to receiving the benefits one is entitled to under Colombian law. This could result in inaccurate coverage of the IDP population and thus the statistics my sources use for analysis. The next most popular source for large amounts of data was the Demographic Censuses of 1993 and

2005. This source finds its limitation in the fact that it does not measure displacement at the municipality level.

Next, the ideological source of my information is important to discuss. Because my question deals with human migration, displacement, and the determination of different places—an in and out binary of Colombia's borders—as more or less attractive to migrate towards, I chose to base my research and argument primarily on migration literature. I used other literatures for smaller components such as the historical background section, but gaps in those literatures were not significant for my limited purposes. The state of migration literature lends itself well to an understanding of factors that influence migration and how this influences changes as the factors change. Further, there is a relatively large amount of migration research pertaining specifically to the displacement crisis in Colombia. Although there were some important and challenging gaps, my reliance upon migration literature ultimately shaped how I framed this question.

This is important because there exist a variety of other literatures through which I could have attempted to answer this question or lenses through which I could have understand the factors I investigated. For example, there exists a robust literature on the question of land in Colombia and how this influences social movements, conflict, and ultimately displacement. In fact, the roots FARC can be traced back to questions over land struggle. Many of the strategies employed by armed actors in Colombia revolve around gaining access to resources or productive capacity in the form of land. Individuals are targeted more frequently in areas that can grow cocoa or illicit drugs, for example. This is a lens through which the armed conflict and hence displacement could be understood and analyzed, though I mostly avoided these questions in favor of migration literature. Another example of an interpretation of this crisis is through environmentalism and traditional beliefs;

some argue the behavior of left-wing guerrilla groups is linked to cultural customs such as environmental preservation.

This is not to imply that these literatures are separate, however. Escobar, for example, notes that guerrilla violence is linked to areas targeted for massive development projects, meaning groups like the FARC, though still a definite cause of rural turmoil, have effects on Colombia outside the study of displacement, violence, and migration.⁷⁷ Ramírez et al., on the other hand, phrase this trend as displacement being more likely in areas left out of the benefits of development.⁷⁸ These two interpretations were identical for my purposes, and I was able to incorporate them both into my arguments, but they are fundamentally at odds in terms of perspectives outside of the scope of my research yet within the scope of research done on displacement in Colombia.

Another common and useful perspective I encountered analyzed the crisis in Colombia in terms of economics. Economics-driven investigations like that on the micro-determinants and welfare losses among the displaced in Colombia by Ibáñez and Vélez are very common, but find their purpose in measuring the losses due to displacement. The negative effects of displacement are not strictly useful for my purposes here, though the causes of displacement identified on micro- and macro-level scales by Ibáñez and Vélez are quite helpful. Most useful were investigations focused on migration such as that into destination and reception sites in Colombia by Dueñas et al., conflict-driven migration flows by Lozano-Gracia et al., and the teasing between internal migration and forced displacement Ramírez et al. provide.

⁷⁷ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

⁷⁸ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 13.

Combining these perspectives on the situation in Colombia elucidates some tensions in the study of migration there. One example of this is the question of violence and migration. Technically speaking, traditional migration study and the study of conflict-induced displacement are not identical. As a result, some sources I used feature violence as a primary factor while others do not mention violence outside of their historical background section. This is perhaps possible because of the uniquely individualized experiences of violence that exist within Colombia, which I will discuss later in this paper. As a result, one could analyze how migration happens within Colombia as a set of identity-based factors assuming the experiences of violence to be inherently different rather than incorporating different elements of violence across different spaces.

More often than not, however, these different literatures and perspectives overlap in the sense that they tend to feature the experience of violence and migration within Colombia. This was very useful for my purposes because it allowed me to catalogue a variety of different factors of influence told through many different perspectives and methodologies. The result was a workable amount of information to investigate my question even though it had not been asked in an academic setting before.

IV. Effects of migration literature as a focus

In addition to the aforementioned consequences of tensions within the study of Colombia and forgoing analysis through other genres of literature, a focus on migration literature has had a number of specific effects on the strategy I ultimately used to investigate my research question. This influence comes in the form of providing terms and frameworks of analysis through which I investigated and analyzed the information I described above.

Of primary importance to the way I structured my research and to a lesser extent how I structure my argument in later chapters is the analytical framework of push and pull factors. For my purposes, I understood factors that appear to incentivize reception as “pull factors” in traditional migration literature and factors that cause expulsion as “push factors” in traditional migration literature. Understanding this distinction was helpful for a number of reasons. First, it provides an easy way to evaluate where any correlatory missing information may exist. For example, after having gained information on violence as a push factor affecting migration, it would follow to investigate safety as a pull factor that could also influence how migration occurs. Of course, one problem that arises with this understanding is that causes and effects do not exist in a binary, Colombia or otherwise. The complexity of these factors means that there rarely exists a clear cause and effect but rather a system of influence that has been mutually produced.

Second, this framework is helpful because it facilitates analysis of different places as being desirable as a possibility for relocation. Because my research question heavily relies upon discrimination between one albeit large location and another, understanding the effects of pull factors provides a good ideological starting point. However, the problem here is that there is no precedent for using a push-pull factor analysis framework for discussing and comparing migration domestically and internationally. As I understand it, the only way to answer this type of question using traditional push- and pull-factor modeling or analysis would be to introduce new elements such as the relative difference in various aspects of life controlled across analogous locations in separate countries. Another approach could be to determine a physical measure of distance between a person who has made the decision to move as a result of violence and the nearest place of adequate safety across different conflict scenarios. Constructing this variable given the individuality of danger, the rapid evolution of

conflict, and the absolute immensity of data required is certainly beyond the scope of my abilities and this thesis. Further, its application would require measurements I am not confident exist.

The next useful framework that influenced the construction of this paper was micro- and macro-level analysis of migration decisions and experiences of violence in particular. Briefly, this involves focusing specifically on what factors may make an individual decide to migrate and separately on what factors influence migration as a whole or which factors affect large amounts of people. Combining the micro and macro levels through this framework of analysis led to my understanding of the subnational heterogeneity of both Colombia's population and their experiences of violence. Of course, this was not a silver bullet either. The most obvious problem that arises from such an analysis is the nonexistence of the meso-level analysis. This is a problem that has significantly shaped the layout of my later analysis.

The final term of note is that of intervening opportunities. This term states that migrants are motivated by good opportunities such as employments and prosperity and are inversely motivated by distance.⁷⁹ In other words, a migrant will generally not continue to move if they have already reached a point that satisfies their needs. In combination with the plurality of danger that describes many areas in Colombia, which I will discuss in more detail in the following chapter, this term provides another possible explanatory factor relating to migrants largely remaining within Colombia. The limitation here is that this trend has

⁷⁹ Denslow, David A., and Peter J. Eaton. "Migration and Intervening Opportunities." *Southern Economic Journal* 51, no. 2 (October 1984): 369.

exceptions, notably that those who experience intense violence tend to migrate farther and rate distance as a primary motivating factor in deciding where to resettle.⁸⁰

Though these three terms and frameworks do not constitute the entirety of the literature I utilized, they do represent the major challenges and limitations in investigating this problem.

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, though research on forced migration within Colombia is robust, there were no silver bullets in the way of sources that alone provided information directly in support of my research question. However, through the combination of academic literature across the disciplines of forced displacement and economic migration, various maps, a few historical sources, and the publications of international organizations, I was able to create a picture of what factors likely influence the forcibly displaced to remain within Colombia. There were a number of key choices I needed to make in the way of choosing which sources to get my information from and this has certainly influenced the direction of and information present in this paper. Ultimately, while there was a plethora of useful information available, I believe more rigorous and exact analysis of my research question across a variety of different scenarios would require new information to be gathered and research to be completed.

⁸⁰ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia." SSRN Electronic Journal, 2006, 1-35.

Chapter 3: Evaluation of Causes of Internal Displacement

I. Introduction

In earlier chapters, I discussed how different factors influence displacement both generally and in the situation affecting displacement in Colombia. Because the conflict in Colombia is decades long, extremely complex and quite anomalous, it is important not to discount the contributions each of these factors have on the various aspects of the displacement crisis. However, this chapter strives to discuss and evaluate each of these factors in an effort to determine which are likely to contribute to Colombia's situation as an internal displacement crisis rather than a refugee crisis. I will start by discussing the most important factors based upon this delineation and explain why I believe they contribute to this anomalous situation. Then, I will discuss less important factors and the factors I deem not to be important.

To determine why each of these factors is or is not important, I will rely upon migration literature generally and, where possible, comparisons to displacement events of similar magnitude but different refugee to IDP ratios. At the time of writing, Syria seems to be the only example of a situation with similar numbers of IDPs. However, at some points such a comparison is not possible and in some others, not necessary. Thankfully, there are not enough displacement events, historical or contemporary, of similar magnitude to make a rigorous comparative framework. Besides Syria, the other two comparative situations that come to mind are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)⁸¹ and Afghanistan.⁸² On some levels, such as the intensity of the conflict and the longer history of violence and displacement, the DRC seems more comparable to the situation in Colombia. However, even

⁸¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Democratic Republic of the Congo." UNHCR. 2018.

⁸² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "National Profile of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan." UNHCR. August 14, 2008.

the DRC's history is very different, containing a much more intense history of hosting refugees itself from the Rwandan genocide and more recently the Central African Republic.⁸³ Additionally, the DRC is much poorer than Colombia and has much more of a problem with state insecurity and failure than does Colombia.⁸⁴ Afghanistan also faces the problem of hosting around 100,000 foreign refugees in addition to their own IDP population,⁸⁵ is a very poor country, and faces problems of state insecurity.⁸⁶ Further, Afghanistan has a complicated history of terrorism and intervention from Western powers. In short, there exists no good comparison to Colombia. I have ultimately settled on using Syria because the numbers of IDPs are similar and the number of refugees is wildly different. I will discuss more of the specific shortcoming of this strategy later in the paper.

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss the strategies used by armed groups in Colombia. All forced displacement events, by definition, feature armed conflict. However, I argue the specific strategies used by Colombian guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and other actors inculcate displacement within Colombia. The behavior of these groups differs from armed actors in other major displacement-producing conflicts in a number of ways, the most relevant for this paper being that the behaviors do not similarly inspire leaving the country. I will discuss individually targeted violence, conflict intensity, and state presence.

Next, I will discuss the economic factors determining forced migration in Colombia and how they contribute to the internal displacement scenario. In this section, I discuss how the economic profile of Colombia contributes to internal migration and how these factors

⁸³ Beytrison, F., & Kalis, O. (2013). Repeated displacement in eastern DRC. *Forced Migration Review*, (43), 22-23.

⁸⁴ Pratt, Morgan R. "The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Insecurity and Conflicts of Belonging." *The Internationalist II* (Spring 2017): 30-38.

⁸⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Afghanistan Fact Sheet." UNHCR. December 13, 2017.

⁸⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "National Profile of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan."

affect migrants. Some examples include Colombia's economic transition and the effects traditional, unforced migration has on forced migrants. Many of the economic effects are also closely linked to the nature of conflict in Colombia and vice versa. For this reason, I will also discuss the relationship between these factors in this section.

After discussing the economic and conflict-based reasons for internal displacement, I will discuss how geographic factors contribute to the internal nature of Colombian displacement. The landscape of Colombia is extremely varied and different topographical features have some influence on internal migration. Further, the placement of cities, oceans and Colombia's borders contribute to the internal nature of displacement. This section is perhaps the most dissimilar to other displacement scenarios.

Finally, I will discuss the socio-legal reasons for internal displacement in Colombia. This section is different from the others in that it has less to do with the causes of displacement and more to do with the lack of solution to displacement. As I will argue in this section, it seems many of Colombia's excellent legal supports and programs for the internally displaced in Colombia do little to help. The way Colombian society is structured also contributes to the time the displaced remain in displacement situations.

After discussing these factors, I will evaluate some of the other causes of internal displacement in Colombia and explain why I do not believe they contributed to the discrepancy in the ratio between Colombian IDPs and refugees. Then, I will discuss all the factors wholistically, the process, end this chapter and begin the conclusion chapter of this thesis.

Finally, I will then compare the situations and experiences of Colombian IDPs and refugees and explain what can and cannot be learned from this comparison.

In the final chapter, I will expand upon these arguments in explaining why they are important to my research question. I will then summarize the importance and potential implications of this paper as well as discuss where further research could expand upon the concepts covered in this paper.

II. Conflict-based effects on internal displacement

As is to be expected when discussing a conflict-based displacement event, there are countless facets of violence that influence each displaced person in different ways. However, on a macroscopic scale, the situation in Colombia is unique primarily because armed groups use targeted violence in a way that is highly individualized and creates a varied spectrum of different experiences of violence within a relatively small area. The widespread nature of violence in Colombia in combination with other factors I will discuss later in this chapter result in subnational heterogeneity in the experience of violence. For example, one family may be targeted with direct threats or violence while their neighbors remain virtually unaffected due to different traits between the two families. Such a story is not uncommon in household-level analyses of displacement in Colombia.⁸⁷ I argue this inculcates internal displacement because there are ‘pockets’ of both violence and safety throughout Colombia as opposed to widespread, indiscriminate, and constant violence that pervades other large, displacement-generating conflicts.

While there is not research that directly investigates this sort of question, I believe factors such as the fact that it is common for municipalities to both receive and expulse large

⁸⁷ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 55, no. 2 (2007): 335-65.

numbers of migrants support this.⁸⁸ Ramírez et al. write, “it is possible to observe that the areas of attraction and expulsion of the displaced are corresponding... [and] this corresponds to 90% of municipalities, according to the official source RUPD-RNI.” If violence were more intense and covered areas more thoroughly, it would be much more likely to observe municipalities, the smallest level of area measurement defined by the Colombian government, to have either expulsive or receptive traditions, but not both as is actually observed.

Further, it is important to note that forced migration is exceptionally and measurably more an individual phenomenon in Colombia than in other situations.⁸⁹ This gives additional support to the research that individuals are targeted and decide to move in a unique way. As for the idea of ‘pockets’ of safety and violence mentioned earlier, the scales of migratory distance are important to note. Only around 15% of migrants move to another location within their municipality of origin.⁹⁰ This does not immediately discount this idea, however. Almost 58% of migrants move to a place within their department of origin. This suggests that there are safe and violent areas within approximately 90% of Colombian municipalities, but a displaced person is not likely to move to a safer location within their own municipality (though this still occurs in around 1/6th of cases). Migrants are likely to move to nearby safe pockets within their department, and the aforementioned research suggests their municipality of reception also has a tradition of people fleeing violence there. This supports the idea of their being pockets of relative safety and danger within municipalities, although displaced persons will only move from one to the other within the same municipality 15% of the time.

⁸⁸ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 12.

⁸⁹ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 159.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 160.

Another piece of supporting evidence to the idea that targeting of violence in Colombia is highly individualistic is the measurement of likelihood to be forcibly displaced based upon different, intersectional facets of identity. Household-level investigations into migration in Colombia reveal individuals are more likely to be targeted by violence if they are younger, female including female-headed households, owning location-specific assets,⁹¹ indigenous or Afro-Colombian, and/or of middle income.⁹² Further, factors like having high income, access to healthcare, and membership in many organizations makes one less likely to be the target of direct threats. Each of these factors, whether positive or negative, contributes to the situation where members of the same communities can have drastically different experiences of violence. As I will cover later in this section, these factors are very powerful and not even police or military presence reduces the instance of direct threats; in fact, military presence increases the likelihood of experiencing direct threats from armed actors.⁹³ Beyond the disparities in experiences of violence, people also react differently to different levels of indirect and direct violence.⁹⁴ Throughout Colombia, a substantial portion of those affected by violence choose to stay despite the threats they may be experiencing, though this area of the literature has not been fully developed. I believe this contributes to the function of most municipalities as both safe and unsafe, or both receiving the forcibly displaced and expelling them. Subsequently, this shed light on this paper's research question because it explains how the nature of violence in Colombia creates a situation where internal displacement is a more viable scenario.

⁹¹ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 335-65.

⁹² Valencia, Jesus M. "Migration and Its Determinants: A Study of Two Communities in Colombia." *Atlantic Economic Journal* 36, no. 2 (2008): 247-60.

⁹³ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 358.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 335-65.

In addition to the strategies armed actors use, the overall level of conflict intensity also contributes to individual—and therefore internal—displacement. Measurement of the intensities of conflicts worldwide reveals Syria as having the most intense violence of any conflict in the post-1989 period.⁹⁵ This is useful to my argument because Syria has around the same number of IDPs as Colombia, but the conflict there has also generated around 16 times or 5 million more refugees than the conflict in Colombia. This is of course not the only reason Syrian displacement differs from that in Colombia, but rather an observable factor. I believe the reason for this is twofold. First, the higher intensity of conflict by definition undermines the individualistic effects of targeted violence described earlier. Second, people who experience more traumatic violence are more likely to travel farther or even as far as possible to safety.⁹⁶ This is thought to be because individuals are traumatized and less likely to be satisfied by smaller distances from violence.

Another conflict-related effect on internal displacement is state presence. Though one may also interpret state presence in economic terms or through the presence of state-provisioned services, for the purposes of this paragraph state presence refers to the Colombian military and police forces. Though the violent clashes and human rights violations in which state actors have historically participated contribute positively to numbers of displacement, there is more recently and observed trend of military and police presence having a negative effect on displacement in Colombia.⁹⁷ This effect takes place both through increasing a sense of overall security and by reducing the capability of armed actors to exercise violence. However, the presence of a Colombian military force specifically increases

⁹⁵ Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallensteen. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 4 (2015): 548.

⁹⁶ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

⁹⁷ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 353.

the chances of receiving direct threats.⁹⁸ In this aspect, police forces do not reduce the number of threats faced by individual households in a community either. These could be the result of increased pressure on the civilian population during the clashes between state actors and armed groups as opposed to the dominance of state actors ensuring security. Regardless of the reasons for these effects, the disparities and patterns that emerge as a result of the presence or absence of state actors adds another layer of complexity to the situation in Colombia. The inability of state actors to reduce the instance of direct threats reinforces the importance of individualized experiences of violence and sociodemographic factors to the chances of being displaced. These results also support the research question because it allows for analysis of conflicts based upon the presence of state actors in relation to determining IDP and refugee flows. Finally, it is important to note that the factors of state presence and displacement are mutually causal and influence and reinforce each other; there exists a two-way relationship between the aforementioned factors and displacement.

III. Economic influences on internal displacement

Economic factors have a wide range of effects on migration within Colombia. The economic prosperity of individuals, the municipality of origin, the destination, and the country's economy as a whole all affect migration in different ways. Of primary interests to the purposes of this paper are the national economy's status as steadily improving, the economic importance of various assets and areas in Colombia, and how an individual's economic means affect their migration decisions.

It is important to clarify that forcibly displaced migrants are technically not driven by economic factors. In fact, the definition of a refugee (and, by extension for our purposes, an

⁹⁸ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 358.

IDP) according to the United Nations is one who “has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group,” which specifically excludes economic factors and includes a form of threat.⁹⁹ While some hope for the inclusion of terrible economic circumstances as being considered a well-founded fear worthy of refugee status protections,¹⁰⁰ including this consideration into my definitions of displaced peoples would require entirely different data—most of which has not been collected—and is therefore outside of the scope of this paper. That being said, there can still be an economic influence on how, where, and when a displaced person decides to flee their home. These are the main considerations given when the phrase “economic influences on internal displacement” is used.

The first economic effect I would like to evaluate is that of forced displacement and traditional economic migration happening together.¹⁰¹ This may not immediately seem to describe a causal relationship; in fact, many traditional migration variables tend to have the opposite effect when applied to models of forced migration.¹⁰² However, these two factors are linked to similar migratory traditions and are linked closely in Colombia. Investigation into the effects of social networks on migration supports this position.¹⁰³ The root cause that links both of these migratory traditions is unequal access to land, which originally caused class conflict, would evolve into the armed conflict that happens today, and has and continues to drive economic migration away from rural areas.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "What Is a Refugee? Definition and Meaning | USA for UNHCR." Definition and Meaning | USA for UNHCR.

¹⁰⁰ Harris, Elizabeth Kay. "Economic Refugees: Unprotected in the United States by Virtue of an Inaccurate Label." *American University International Law Review* 9, no. 1 (1993): 269-307.

¹⁰¹ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

¹⁰² Ibáñez, Ana María, and Carlos Eduardo Vélez. "Civil Conflict and Forced Migration: The Micro Determinants and Welfare Losses of Displacement in Colombia." 672

¹⁰³ Adhikari, Prakash. "Conflict-Induced Displacement, Understanding the Causes of Flight." *American Journal of Political Science* 57, no. 1 (2012): 82-89. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2012.00598.x.

¹⁰⁴ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

Colombia has undergone rapid population urbanization since at least the 1940s¹⁰⁵ due to industrialization and better opportunities in cities. The 1940s is also when the aforementioned event, *La Violencia*, occurred and began Colombia's long association between political activity and violence. This violence caused, in addition to over 2 million deaths, massive unemployment and mass expulsions of the peasant class. Since this time period, violence and urbanization have both continued and, as a result, both traditional and forced migration to cities has also continued. In other words, the forced displacement migratory trends have always coincided with and mirrored the traditional migratory trends due to demographic pressure, economic expulsion, demand for labor and structural factors in Colombia.¹⁰⁶ The same migratory channels and infrastructure are used by both economic migrants and forced migrants, especially when the destination is a more urban area. Further, as I will discuss in more detail when describing the effects of social networks, when a displaced person has made the decision to leave, they are more likely to follow the path of someone they know.¹⁰⁷ Because this is not limited to forced migrants, this means any migration, including economic migration, can influence where forced migrants travel.

The reason economic migration's influence on forced migration is significant is because it is already well understood how economic migration occurs within a country; as a country industrializes, more opportunities become available in urban centers and draw economic migrants from urban areas. Therefore, I argue Colombia's link between economic and forced displacement is a contributing factor as to why there is a high proportion of IDPs to refugees as a result of this conflict. However, this alone is not as important as the

¹⁰⁵ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach." 2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁷ Engel and Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 335-65.

aforementioned conflict-based factors because other countries have high refugee to IDP ratios and are also developing economically and industrializing.¹⁰⁸ It is only when these factors are combined with the less intense and more targeted, dispersed violence that the economic migration creates a more unusual situation of disproportionate IDPs.

Another economic factor that contributes to the proportion of displaced persons remaining in Colombia is development and its influences on migration and violence. Armed groups such as guerrillas and paramilitaries often disperse violence strategically to gain control of military assets or as part of an illicit economy.¹⁰⁹ Such goals include but are not limited to agribusiness, weapons access, and controlling zones earmarked for macro-development projects,¹¹⁰ and the effects are more targeted displacement. This is different from the targeting I discussed in the conflict-based effects section because the trend here is linked to areas left out of (though some would contest this language) development seeing higher levels of expulsion.¹¹¹ In other words, displacement in Colombia tends to affect those with fewer resources and those who are members of minority groups such as the Afro-Colombians and Amerindians. As one of the more economically unequal countries in the world¹¹²—a quick comparison ranks Colombia as 32nd most equal and Syria as 154th or one of the top 30 most unequal—this adds another layer of complexity to the targeting of who must migrate in violent areas. This contributes to more IDPs than refugees because, in addition to the resulting ‘pockets’ of danger and safety making long journeys unreasonable,

¹⁰⁸ Khawaja, Marwan. "Internal Migration in Syria: Findings from a National Survey." Fafo Report 375 (2002). 36.

¹⁰⁹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach."

¹¹⁰ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

¹¹¹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach."

¹¹² Central Intelligence Agency. "COUNTRY COMPARISON :: DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY INCOME - GINI INDEX." Central Intelligence Agency.

those whom violent groups are more likely to target likely have fewer resources with which to flee the country entirely.

Although this logical reasoning makes sense in context, in practice there are many variables at play. Some write that those with less to lose are more likely to migrate,¹¹³ but several papers contest the effects of having more assets or wealth on migration,¹¹⁴ and very little if any research focuses on one's likelihood to flee the country or remain within its borders. I argue the economic inequality of Colombia superimposed upon a background of ethnic discrimination, unequal development, and distinctive patterns of targeted violence contribute to the higher percentage of IDPs, but I also understand there is no research upon which to base my link between development and destination in internal forced migration.

IV. Geographic effects on internal displacement

In addition to the various economic facets of Colombian society and the plurality of violence, Colombia's unique geography influences how migration takes place within the country. This includes physical geographical features, distances and location, population distribution, and access to roads. These factors are important to my research question because they partially determine how easy it is for many Colombians to either remain within Colombia or flee the country if all else were equal. In my investigation of these factors, I in fact found many reasons Colombia's geography influences remaining within the country.

The first of these reasons is the population distribution. Upon studying a population density map of Colombia, one discovers the majority of the population lives in the Andes

¹¹³ Valencia, Jesus M. "Migration and Its Determinants: A Study of Two Communities in Colombia." 247-60.

¹¹⁴ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 157.

region or otherwise away from the Southern and Eastern parts of the country as well as most of Colombia's international borders. Colombia's relatively large size should also be considered here. This includes the entire border with Peru, a portion of the border with Ecuador, the majority of the border with Venezuela, and the entirety of the border with Brazil. Further, these regions often struggle with access as there are very few roads and the region is heavily forested. The only border regions with significant nearby populations are along the borders with Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. I will discuss these regions later in this section. As for the largely uninhabited border regions, the significance lies in how easy it is for the majority of the population to move out of Colombia. These population density maps show that, for most Colombians, foreign countries are far away. Combining this with what I have discussed in other sections of this chapter, this means a safer place in Colombia is likely closer than a safer place in a foreign country for most of those fleeing violence.

The next geographic factor of influence pertains to the distance traveled by migrants. Given that forced migrants in Colombia are likely to leave their municipality but unlikely to leave their department,¹¹⁵ the physical distance of travel appears to be influential in how migrants determine where to relocate. This is important because it strengthens the geographic influence of population distribution. If the majority of those displaced travel within their department and most live far from international borders, it follows that most would choose to remain within the country all else equal.

As for the municipalities and departments on border areas, the geographic distribution of migratory reception sites is relevant. Municipalities on Colombia's borders with Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama have high migrant reception rates.¹¹⁶ Notably, these are not the

¹¹⁵ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach."

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

borders I indicated were sparsely populated and far away from the majority of Colombians in previous sections. This quality of populated border areas is relevant because it gives insight into how people migrate, a possible indication of their decision-making, and provides another logical reason to remain in Colombia. Although it is impossible to know exactly why these migrants are stopping at border areas without an interview or survey, one could infer that this was at least partially intentional. Regardless, this quality of border areas indicates that there are safe locations along the border. From the perspective of a migrant, it makes sense to stop at a safe location within one's country as opposed to passing safe locations and fleeing the country. Of course, Colombia's small refugee population indicates this is not absolute logic, but it does shed light onto how migrants may disproportionately remain.

The final geographic factor I would like to discuss is a comparison to its neighbors and comparisons between Colombian refugees and IDPs. As I discussed in earlier chapters, there exist various economic and social problems in Colombia's most geographically accessible neighbors, Ecuador and Venezuela. Likewise, despite the ongoing civil conflict, Colombia is doing well economically. Though very difficult to quantify, it follows that there would be an incentive to remain in Colombia. At the very least, it is certain there would be greater incentive to leave Colombia if there were more stable and economically developed countries along accessible and populated borders. This is reflected by the data and trends surrounding refugees in the area. Recently, most likely as a result of the unrest in Venezuela and negotiations between the Colombian government and rebel groups, Colombian international migration as a result of violence has slowed down or reversed. Additionally, it is now likely Colombia hosts more refugees within its borders than the number of Colombian refugees in other countries. Although the exact nature of this migration is impossible to

predict as of now, what this information does support is the idea that Colombia's neighbors are not providing unusual incentive to leave the country.

This lack of incentive could possibly be compounded by the poor conditions experienced by Colombian refugees in other countries, particularly Ecuador. Colombian refugees are often discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, something that cannot happen within Colombia.¹¹⁷ This includes social isolation, violent attacks, targeted robberies, and lack of access to resources and property.¹¹⁸ Further, border areas in Ecuador, where the overwhelming majority of Colombian refugees live, also experience the rampant and targeted violence that plagues much of Colombia, often by the same groups that operate within Colombia. Again, this does not alone explain why Colombians tend not to migrate internationally, especially given there are hundreds of thousands who have and that information would have a hard time travelling back into Colombia, but this does contribute to an understanding of the factors that influence where those displaced by violence in Colombia ultimately decide to relocate.

V. Socio-legal influences on internal displacement

Socio-legal factors also contribute to how migration takes place within Colombia and influence the crisis in such a way that makes possible this high disparity between IDPs and refugees. Unlike the other factors discussed, part of the way socio-legal factors influence the situation is through maintaining the high IDP population or preventing the resolution of their situation or their integration into society. This means that Colombia's social and legal

¹¹⁷ Mancheno, Luis F. (2014) "Persecuted, Discriminated, and Rejected: The Firm Resettlement Bar to Colombian Refugees Living in Ecuador."

¹¹⁸ Shedlin, Michele G., Carlos U. Decena, Hugo Noboa, and Óscar Betancourt. "Sending-Country Violence and Receiving-Country Discrimination: Effects on the Health of Colombian Refugees in Ecuador." 119-24.

structures keep IDPs displaced for longer than would otherwise be likely. The socio-legal factors I will discuss in this section are legal holdups and the lack of service provision, the link between politics and violence in the national psyche, social networks and their effect on migration decisions, and the conceptualization of the problem as needing to be solved on a national level.

The most relevant socio-legal factor is the institutional mess that affects IDPs in Colombia. Many IDPs live in informal settlements outside of major cities.¹¹⁹ In those settlements, formal housing is economically out of reach for most IDPs and the services promised to them are largely absent.¹²⁰ When considering that most IDPs live in extreme poverty and have a lower chance of gaining employment, this means that IDPs are often stuck in a situation where they cannot afford formal housing and there is no promise of this on the horizon. Such laws and societal factors do not affect those who have left Colombia. This does not affect how migrants move, but it does affect why there are disproportionately more IDPs than refugees.

Of next importance is the link between political participation or political activity and violence within the Colombian psyche. As I discussed in the background section of the first chapter, the conflict affecting Colombia today has deep political roots. The first period of significance, *La Violencia*, came to be after a populist, leftist leader was assassinated and pitted the two major political ideologies against each other. In the decades that followed, the assassination or disappearance of those involved in politics from the national to the local level was very common. The result of this process over decades has been a widespread acceptance of violence as part of the political process in Colombia and of violent acts as being linked to politics. The latter is very important for the purposes of my research question.

¹¹⁹ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

¹²⁰ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

This is because of the aforementioned link between psychological trauma and the distance migrants travel. Typically, those who have faced intense trauma tend to migrate much farther distances to achieve an idea of safety.¹²¹ If violent acts are not seen as anomalous but rather as an effect of the political system, it follows that people would be less shocked by violence near their community and therefore less likely to travel far distances to leave the country. This does not imply that Colombians are not threatened by violent acts—the record of displacement confirms this—but rather that these threatening, violent acts are seen as more commonplace that they otherwise would be due to the historical link between politics and violence.

VI. Factors of less significance

Throughout earlier chapters, I presented a variety of factors that affect displacement in Colombia. I included these factors because they influence how the situation takes place and provide important information on understanding more fully the dynamics of the crisis and how this came to disproportionately produce IDPs. However, this does not mean that all of the information I presented or discovered was directly relevant in answering my research question. In this section, I will briefly mention some of the factors that indeed affect displacement in Colombia, but that I argue are not responsible for the disparities I study.

The most surprising of such factors were the economic influences on displacement. Though some were indeed relevant, I found that many economic factors of Colombia's displacement crisis were similar to those found in other displacement crises with a more even distribution of IDPs and refugees or that had no discernable difference within Colombia when compared to leaving Colombia. An example of this is high personal income and the decision

¹²¹ báñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

to migrate. I found some sources stressed that high income individuals had greater ability to absorb the costs of migration and were therefore more likely to decide to migrate. Other sources show migration is more likely where migrants have less to lose. This would imply the opposite.

Another surprising factor was the different effects of the conflict based upon location in Colombia. Although there indeed exist different strategies used by armed groups in different regions and discrepancies between rural and urban areas, there are not large areas of Colombia where violence is not in some way present. Most sources indicate migration occurs in upwards of 90% of municipalities in Colombia, which is the smallest denomination of area measured by the government. Further, there are not large battles, fronts where different groups interact head-to-head, or large areas under control by any entity other than the Colombian government. This fact in itself is relevant to my study, but I do not believe geographic distributions of violence as separate phenomena exist to influence my research question in ways I expected.

Finally, the individual discrepancies between different identities' exposures to violence was not relevant in the way I had expected. When initially engaging with the micro-level determinants of violence, I believed the dispositions of different groups of people such as the young or the female to be instrumental in determining why the crisis produced IDPs. This is not the case for a few reasons. First, I could not find adequate data to make direct comparisons between this and violence in other displacement-producing conflict. Notably, this is because violence in Colombia is unique. Second, the individual targeting of groups does not explain how or why these people choose to remain within the country. However, I did find that the existence of individual targeting was relevant to my research question. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, this contributes to the phenomena whereby

there exist different experiences of violence within areas and therefore that communities are simultaneously safe and unsafe. This allows the distance to safety to be less than if large areas of indiscriminate violence existed. This does not mean, however, that the individual data on targeting different identities is immediately relevant as I expected.

VII. Comparison between Colombian IDPs and refugees

There exists a reasonable amount of literature on both Colombian IDPs and refugees, however, the results of comparing these two groups does not provide much useful information towards the investigation of my research question. This is due to a number of factors, including difficulty in investigating both groups, the similarity in displacement determinants, and the similarity in destination experiences.

First, both IDPs in Colombia and Colombian refugees are relatively unusual groups. Colombian IDPs are anomalous because of their enormous quantity, long and unique historical context, and rapidly developing contemporary experiences. All of these factors make this population very difficult to compare with any other displaced population. The Colombian refugees, on the other hand, do not have a vast literary spectrum outside of humanitarian and health-related articles.

Second, the causes of displacement for both of these groups are very similar. Both groups cite individual threats, experience of violence, forced recruitment into armed groups, and related factors for their migration.¹²² This is to be expected because they both stem from the same conflict, but the lack of a defining characteristic makes glean new information from the comparison impossible.

¹²² Shedlin, Michele G., Carlos U. Decena, Hugo Noboa, and Óscar Betancourt. "Sending-Country Violence and Receiving-Country Discrimination: Effects on the Health of Colombian Refugees in Ecuador."

Finally, the situation each group experiences after migration is either too similar to compare effectively or explanatory of the discrepancy in the numbers of IDPs and refugees. Colombian refugees in Ecuador in particular experience a plethora of maladies, including almost all of those experienced by Colombian IDPs. To my knowledge, there is no existing direct comparison of these two experiences and such a comparison would be exceedingly difficult. Additionally, as I have mentioned earlier, Colombian refugees experience nationalist discrimination and can be used as political scapegoats for various problems in Ecuador and Venezuela. At best, the comparison of these scenarios does not give much in the way of definitive explanations for the disparity between Colombian IDPs and refugees. At worst, these factors could provide a cautionary tale for those making migration decisions to remain within Colombia.

VIII. Conclusion

Though there are a variety of influences on migration due to violence in Colombia, only some of these factors help explain why the crisis has produced a disproportionate number of IDPs. In order of chief influence, I argue the relevant influences are factors of violence, economic factors, geographic factors, and socio-legal factors. Upon synthesizing this information, it became increasingly clear that these different relevant factors are linked both to each other and to Colombia's unique history. In this chapter, I evaluated the factors influencing the situation in Colombia based upon their relevance to my research question. In the next chapter, I will summarize the relevant factors, discuss in more depth why they are relevant (including comparisons outside of Colombia), discuss the relevance of this research, and talk about where future research could go and what the implications could be for the future of forced displacement.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

I. Introduction

In earlier chapters, I provided background, historical context, and a summary of factors influencing displacement in Colombia; reviewed the state of literature on the subject and similar topics and discussed some of the tensions that exist there; explained my methodology for the construction of this thesis and the support of my argument; and analyzed the factors leading to displacement and argued why each was either important or unimportant to addressing my research question. In this chapter, I will review the important factors influencing displacement and discuss their importance through comparisons to migration literature as a whole or to other displacement scenarios when possible and relevant. Then, I will discuss the relevance of these conclusions. Finally, I will discuss the implications this research has and what future research could accomplish.

II. Summary of relevant factors

As it pertains to the question of why the forcibly displaced in Colombia disproportionately remain within their country as IDPs, I argue the most important factors are the element and nuances of violence present in the country as a result of the long-standing conflicts there. This primarily manifests through the individualized nature of violence, intensity of conflict, and presence of police or military actors.

First and foremost, violence in Colombia is unique to the question of why the displaced become IDPs because it is highly individualized. Though the left-wing guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and state actors all use violence to capture territory and resources, it is not often they control large, continuous territories and displace everyone in the vicinity. Instead, the groups often act out of rural or uninhabited areas and make specific threats to

individuals with informed knowledge of their specific identities, social connections, and income level.¹²³

The experience of this violence is therefore varied based upon the identity of the individual. Households headed by the young, female, middle income, indigenous or Afro-Colombian, or those that hold location-specific assets are more likely to be targeted directly with violence.¹²⁴ On the other hand, those with high income, access to healthcare, and membership in many organizations are less likely to receive direct threats of violence.¹²⁵ On an even deeper level, individuals in the aforementioned groups have different reactions to their already different experiences of violence, both direct and indirect. In addition to direct threats, left-wing guerrillas and paramilitaries use a variety of other violent techniques that can cause displacement and discriminate based upon the individual. The end result of this type of violence is a very small-scale experience of fear. As such, different people can experience almost the exact same area as both peaceful and dangerous and safety and danger alike are both present throughout the areas of Colombia affected by conflict.

The next significant, conflict-related factor is the intensity of conflict. Generally speaking, Colombia is a low-intensity conflict, especially when compared to other refugee-producing events worldwide and even more so those of similar magnitude.¹²⁶ In Colombia, there are not large battles, fronts of controlled territory, or entire cities lost to rebel groups in the way other displacement-producing conflicts such as Syria have experienced. This is also related to the techniques the violent actors in Colombia use, so much of the information has the same result. All-in-all, it is easier to both flee violence and attain a

¹²³ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 359.

¹²⁴ Ibáñez, Ana María, and Carlos Eduardo Vélez. "Civil Conflict and Forced Migration: The Micro Determinants and Welfare Losses of Displacement in Colombia." 672

¹²⁵ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 359.

¹²⁶ Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallensteen. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." 548.

feeling of safety within a country undergoing conflict if the conflict is at a low intensity. Those doing so will also travel a smaller distance if their experience of violence is less severe.¹²⁷

Finally, state presence in the form of military and police forces is significant. These groups provide a sense of security that reduces the tendency for displacement.¹²⁸ However, these groups also clash with non-state actors and in fact increase the number of direct threats in areas where both are present.¹²⁹ This factor is primarily significant because state presence across Colombia is unequal.

Of next in importance are economic factors. These manifest through the mixed flow of economic migration and forced displacement, the results of development, and income inequality. There are certainly other economic influences on displacement patterns in Colombia, but I do not believe these to be strictly relevant to the Colombian case for reasons I will discuss in the next section.

First, the most important economic factor is the link between internal, economic migration and migration due to forced displacement. These two patterns are linked and influence each other.¹³⁰ This happens because of historical similarities between rural violence and industrialization that I have discussed in more depth in previous chapters. This phenomena is important because, as an industrializing nation, Colombia has strong and well-understood demographic pressures that influence its internal migration. The fact that this happens to be linked to forced displacement makes the potential for understanding the patterns of migration and why forced migrants remain within Colombia more apparent.

¹²⁷ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

¹²⁸ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 353.

¹²⁹ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 358.

¹³⁰ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

Next, development and its effects have influence on patterns of displacement and migration in Colombia. Multiple sources have noticed the FARC specifically are active in locations zoned for mega development projects and subsequently displace a greater proportion of people in those areas.¹³¹ This has other implications on identity that I have discussed in more detail in previous chapters. The significance of this fact for the purposes of understanding why the displaced largely remain within Colombia is that development projects are distributed unevenly across spatial and sociodemographic lines.¹³² This adds another layer of predictability to the displacement in Colombia and why it remains largely internal.

Finally, income inequality also has some degree of influence on why migrants remain in Colombia. This happens through the aforementioned effect of targeted violence, where those of different income levels have widely different experiences of violence and abilities to migrate. Because Colombia is one of the most unequal countries in the world in terms of GINI coefficient, these differences are exacerbated and contribute to the discrepancy in safety within areas.¹³³

Next in my hierarchy of importance are geographic factors. These amount to population distribution, land accessibility and physical geographic features, and the qualities of border municipalities, all in relation to the above factors. First, the majority of Colombia's population lives in the Andes region or otherwise away from international borders. The entirety of the Peruvian and Brazilian borders are sparsely inhabited as well as the majority of the Venezuelan border. Additionally, many border areas are inaccessible, including Peru,

¹³¹ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

¹³² Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach."

¹³³ Central Intelligence Agency. "COUNTRY COMPARISON :: DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY INCOME - GINI INDEX." Central Intelligence Agency.

Brazil, and Panama. Heavy forest and other physical features have an understood influence on migration.¹³⁴ Next, given the relatively small scale of migration, traveling to a border area is in itself an unlikely possibility for many Colombian migrants. Further, municipalities on Colombia's borders with Ecuador, Venezuela, and Panama have a high propensity to receive the internally displaced. Thus, even if a migrant did travel to the border as a result of displacement, it would be common for them to be received there. Finally, Colombia is doing quite well compared to its most accessible neighbors, despite the pervading armed conflict. Venezuela is experiencing high instability and economic downturn. Ecuador hosts some of the same armed groups as Colombia. All of these factors combine to incentivize displaced persons' remaining within Colombia.

Finally of importance are the socio-legal factors. These include legal limbo and lack of service provision keeping numbers high, social networks, the link between politics and violence in the national psyche, and the perception of the crisis as a problem to be solved at the national level.

First, many IDPs live in informal settlements outside of major cities.¹³⁵ Due to a combination of factors including a lack of effective and promised service provision, the cost of formal housing remains soundly out of the reach of most IDPs.¹³⁶ In other words, the structural problems affecting both the Colombian government as a whole and its ability to provide the services it has promised to IDPs result in a situation where very few of the internally displaced ever give up that title; many IDPs have no way out of their situation and also cannot return home. This keeps the number of IDPs in Colombia high and does not similarly affect refugee populations.

¹³⁴ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 171.

¹³⁵ Escobar, Arturo. "Displacement, Development, and Modernity in the Colombian Pacific*." 157-67.

¹³⁶ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

Next, social networks influence the chances of migrants remaining in Colombia. This is mainly due to the factors covered in the economics section, where migrants are likely to emulate the migratory paths of their friends and family i.e. their social network.¹³⁷ Because social networks are more likely to exist within countries than across them,¹³⁸ this reinforces the effects already unique to Colombia's historical background.

Due to the historical events I covered in previous chapters, there is a long-standing link between the political process and political activity in Colombia and violence. This reinforces the likelihood of migrants to remain within Colombia because it influences their perception of violent events as abnormal or traumatic. Migrants who have experienced traumatic violence tend to migrate much further to find safety.¹³⁹

Finally, the last significant factor I argue influences the situation in Colombia is the perception of the problem to be solved at a higher level. Local governments accurately recognize the displacement crisis as a problem affecting all of Colombia, but also assume that it is strictly within the government's power to do anything about this.¹⁴⁰ Thus, uncountable potential good is not enacted on the assumption that the problem is outside of the capabilities of local governments and actors.

III. Discussion of factors

In previous chapters and sections, I have described what factors are significant to my research question. In this section, I will elaborate on those factors as describe what makes them relevant to the situation in Colombia in the context of migration literature as a whole

¹³⁷ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

¹³⁸ Jampaklay, Aree, Kathleen Ford, and Aphichat Chamrathirong. "How Does Unrest Affect Migration? Evidence from the Three Southernmost Provinces of Thailand." *Demographic Research* 37 (2017): 25-52.

¹³⁹ báñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

¹⁴⁰ Albuja, Sebastián, and Marcela Ceballos. "Urban Displacement and Migration in Colombia." 10-11.

and other conflict areas where possible and relevant. I will more-or-less discuss the factors in the same order as the previous section, but will make adjustments to fit the style of this section.

First are the factors of violence. I believe these factors are the most significant because all situations of forced displacement by definition contain a conflict element. The elements of the conflict in Colombia that are unique will be very pertinent to discussion of why the situation there is so measurably anomalous. Comparison with Syria, the only other conflict today that has produced over 7 million IDPs, is especially useful. I will begin by discussing the individuality of violence and displacement in Colombia.

The most important connection to make between the conflict in Colombia and the displacement happening there is its individuality. This is important because it allows for already existing social inequalities to magnify and creates a situation where there are safe areas nearby, even in areas of danger for other people. This is because violence in Colombia does not definitively mark large areas as unsafe for all inhabitants. Though the left-wing guerrilla groups, paramilitaries, and state actors in Colombia all use violence to capture territory and resources, it is not often the case that large fronts are present where open conflict occurs. This means there are not large areas relatively speaking under the control of military groups and the effects of their presence do not exist on a scale of even the smallest of Colombia's area divisions: the municipality. While there are of course more and less violent municipalities, there are none that are completely under the control of a non-state actor as is the case in Syria. This is supported by the observation that migration due to violence in Colombia is an anomalously small-scale event, with only 11% participating in mass migration.¹⁴¹ In other words, most migrants in Colombia migrate either alone or in small

¹⁴¹ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

groups such as with their immediate family, which is not typical. Although exact statistics are hard to locate, few would argue that the situation in Syria elicits mass migration on a much larger percentage and scale.¹⁴² Further, the violence in Syria is much less individual and more widespread than in Colombia.¹⁴³

This is the definition of intensity of conflict, another important aspect of the conflict in Colombia. Colombia is a low-intensity conflict, which is anomalous compared to other large-scale, displacement-producing conflicts.¹⁴⁴ Part of this is related to the techniques the violent actors in the various countries use. For example, the use of chemical weapons in Syria was obviously much more shocking an event than would occur in Colombia. These shocking events, intense violent techniques, and widespread violence create huge incentives for fleeing as well as induce psychological harm. As has been mentioned earlier, this psychological shock has direct ramifications for how far the displaced will likely travel.¹⁴⁵ This is without even mentioning the discrepancies in state-enacted violence and its effect on fleeing the country that may exist with further research. It is very likely the difference psychological trauma (generally speaking—individuals have widely varying experiences, of course) between victims in Colombia and Syria is what drives migrants in Syria to not only flee the country, but also to risk their lives in makeshift boats and smuggling routes across thousands of miles¹⁴⁶ while the majority of Colombians relocate to an area within their department of origin¹⁴⁷ (as a commentary on physical distance travelled).

¹⁴² Bick, Alexander. "Strategic Dimensions of Forced Migration in Syria." *SAIS Review of International Affairs* 37, no. 2 (2017): 25-32.

¹⁴³ Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallensteen. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." 548.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 548.

¹⁴⁵ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

¹⁴⁶ Mandić and Simpson

¹⁴⁷ Lozano-Gracia, Nancy, Gianfranco Piras, Ana Maria Ibáñez, and Geoffrey J. D. Hewings. "The Journey to Safety: Conflict-Driven Migration Flows in Colombia." 160.

The final conflict-related factor I would like to discuss is that of state presence. This is a factor that only makes sense in the context of a low-intensity conflict, so I will not use a comparison to Syria in this section. As I mentioned earlier, state presence in the form of police and military forces has a negative correlation with displacement, but a positive correlation with direct threats of violence in areas where it overlaps with the presence of armed groups.¹⁴⁸ This is significant because of both its relation to the factors of intensity and individualism of violence, but also because state presence is not uniform and exacerbates other elements of inequality in Colombia.¹⁴⁹ Further, state presence is a relatively widely-covered topic for research across many countries, including those without displacement-producing conflict. Therefore its relevance to displacement is useful in the application of this research in other contexts.

Next, I will discuss the economic factors relating to displacement in Colombia. These factors are significant because they link displacement to demographic pressures, development projects, pre-existing inequalities, and support the factors of violence in Colombia.

As I mentioned in the previous section, the most significant economic factor is mixed flow, or the link between traditional migration and migration due to forced displacement. Demographic factors are incredibly powerful and have resulted in intense and rapid urbanization in developing countries worldwide. I argue the fact that historical factors and social network link this process to forced displacement has a huge impact on the disproportionate number of IDPs in Colombia. This also factors into the geographic factors I have discussed in previous chapters because, for almost the entirety of the Colombian

¹⁴⁸ Engel, Stefanie, and Ana María Ibáñez. "Displacement Due to Violence in Colombia: A Household-Level Analysis." 358.

¹⁴⁹ Ramírez, Sulma Marcela Cuervo, Alisson Flávio Barbieri, and José Irineu Rangel Rigotti. "Internal Migration and Forced Displacement in Colombia in the Transition into the 21st Century: A Multiscale Approach."

population, cities within Colombia are closer, easier to get to, perceived as safe, have economic attractiveness, and are more likely to host members of one's social network. Other ways to classify this factor as significant could include having a history of rural violence and militarism superimposed upon a concurrently industrializing set of urban areas.

The next economic factor of importance is development. Whether you believe armed groups oppose areas zoned for development projects because of environmental activism or control over points of access and resource-rich territory, there is no denying it is an observable trend and that it reinforces existing ethnic and economic inequalities in Colombia. This is significant because it indicates a predictable preference for violence within Colombia that does not uniformly affect the population, which I have already argued supports the idea of Colombia as being an extremely heterogeneous location in terms of safety.

Finally, income inequality is significant to the situation in Colombia. This is because Colombia is so intensely and increasingly unequal.¹⁵⁰ For context, it even ranks 124 places above Syria in world rankings. This inequality reinforces the ability for a heterogeneous population and therefore, in the context of individualized violence, an optimal opportunity for creating different conditions of safety based upon identity.

Next to discuss are geographic factors. A summary of these results is that Colombia's neighbors are physically difficult to travel to given Colombia's geography and that Colombia, despite its internal conflict, still looks good in comparison to its neighbors economically and in terms of stability. Syria has not been spared economically like Colombia has. The CIA estimates Syria's GDP per capita as 164th in the world.¹⁵¹ Similarly, even though the conflict

¹⁵⁰ Central Intelligence Agency. "COUNTRY COMPARISON :: DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY INCOME - GINI INDEX." Central Intelligence Agency.

¹⁵¹ Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook: SYRIA." Central Intelligence Agency. April 24, 2018.

in Syria has destabilized its neighbors,¹⁵² it still remains the most unstable country in the area. This is generally true for countries with large, displacement-producing conflicts. Finally, for another example of comparison, Syria's population is highly concentrated on its Western border with Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and to a lesser degree Israel and the coast. While the physical geography of Syria may not be ideal for informal migration, there are also well-developed road networks into its neighbors in near the borders and near the areas of population concentration. Syria is also a much smaller country than Colombia at 90th place in the world by area compared to 27th place for Colombia.¹⁵³ In other words, the geography of Syria is quite favorable to fleeing the country.

Finally are the socio-legal factors. Of primary concern are the set of laws that induce a scenario where IDPs have structural forces preventing them from absolving their situation. This is not significant in causing displacement per se, rather it is significant to my research question because it results in a higher number of IDPs than could otherwise be possible.

Next is the collective national perception of participation in politics as violent or that violence is commonplace. This is significant because it softens the general understanding of conflict and affects how far migrants in Colombia travel; migrants who suffer from trauma usually migrate to more distant locations in search of safety.¹⁵⁴ This link means violence is not seen as particularly anomalous and would likely be seen as political participation. Though displacement levels indicate violence is still seen as threatening, the likelihood of a migrant seeing violence take place within their community as traumatic is lower than would otherwise be the case. Migrants in Colombia would perhaps travel further, and therefore have a higher likelihood of leaving the country and becoming a refugee, if the association between the

¹⁵² Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallenstein. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." 543.

¹⁵³ Central Intelligence Agency. "The World Factbook: SYRIA."

¹⁵⁴ Ibáñez, Ana M., and Andres Moya. "The Impact of Intra-State Conflict on Economic Welfare and Consumption Smoothing: Empirical Evidence for the Displaced Population in Colombia."

violent conflict and the political events of the mid-20th century were not so strong or perhaps if the conflict emerged more recently. For other conflicts to have this same association would require decades of well-understood and available history.

Social networks are also significant to the internal displacement crisis in Colombia. However, this is not just because they have the effect of influencing migrants to stay within their country of origin; this would affect any country with a displacement event. This effect is instead significant because it reinforces the mixed flow described earlier. Thus, in summary, the influence of economic development, historical association, demographic pressures, and social networks all influence forcibly displaced persons in Colombia to follow the patterns of traditional economic migration into the cities.

The final factor of significance I would like to discuss is the perception of the crisis as needing to be solved at the national level. This is, in theory, a problem that could affect all displacement events. However, it is unlikely that this would be as significant a problem for the displaced in a high-intensity conflict, especially because this perception would be more accurate. High intensity conflicts like Syria can involve the militaries of multiple nations and over 1,000 armed groups.¹⁵⁵ This is much different from a municipal government actor operating safely out of Bogotá assuming what is essentially service provision and development work should only be done by the higher-ups.

In summary, the factors that lead to Colombia having a disproportionately large IDP population compared to its refugee population are its low-intensity, individualized violence; the various discrepancies within the population that are relevant to their propensity to migrate and face threats of said violence; the history of political violence and its relationship to economic migration; the unique physical geography and location of Colombia; and the

¹⁵⁵ Pettersson, Therése, and Peter Wallenstein. "Armed Conflicts, 1946–2014." 583.

structure of Colombia's specific laws and society. If Colombia is to serve as an example, a hypothetical country at risk for the same intensely disproportionate IDP population could be any that have a historical connection between political activity and violence, a disposition favoring low-intensity conflict, intense inequalities spanning a variety of identity-based factors, geographic isolation, or poor laws relating to the restitution of victims of violence.

IV. Relevance of this research

As I discussed at the beginning of this paper, IDPs and refugees have very different experiences around the world. Despite fleeing for similar reasons and facing similar or worse conditions, IDPs have no protected status under today's international laws. I have seen firsthand how bad conditions for refugees in a safe country can be and cannot imagine how those faring even worse are afforded fewer protections. For example, in a situation like Myanmar where the government appears to be persecuting its own citizens and committing human rights violations, this is an incredibly important distinction to make in the interests of humanity. Agents like the UNHCR and Norwegian Refugee Council today must act with the permission of the governments overseeing this displacement. While this is not a perfect arrangement in Colombia, it is certainly better than the situation in Myanmar and the hypothetical future internal displacement situation that finally shocks the international community into reforming IDP protections. Though this was just one case study, definitively establishing risk factors for countries that could lead to internal displacement could help the world predict and prepare for horrible atrocities. Further, better understanding how internal displacement works could be used to better advocate for the victims of displacement and their rights internationally. This research will continue to be important so long as IDPs and refugees have unequal rights before international law.

V. Implications for future research

I maintain the view that this research question is incredibly important and its answer has the potential to influence a very alarming gap in international law. Further research could improve upon the factors affecting Colombia's IDP crisis specifically by interviewing or surveying both IDPs and refugees about their decisions to leave or stay in Colombia specifically. Additionally, a framework of statistical analysis involving the main points of my paper and said data could measure what factors influence displacement.

On the topic of research outside of Colombia, there are many opportunities to extend the knowledge of what factors influence an IDP crisis versus a refugee crisis. First, the opposite type of research could be done in other displacement-producing conflicts to determine what factors may contribute to a refugee crisis instead of an IDP crisis. Further, situations like Syria with high populations of both IDPs and refugees could conduct the same sets of surveys or interviews described above to determine why individuals choose to stay or leave.

To build off of the implications of this research, one could investigate how IDP interventions could most effectively be conducted by state actors, international organizations, or both. Colombia alone provides some example of both events, though they are decidedly far from ideal.

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